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Lambeth Conference Opens

(Canterbury) - The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, opened the ninth Lambeth Conference on July 3 with a sermon in Canterbury Cathedral, heard by more than 400 bishops of the Anglican Communion and representatives of the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Armenian Church, the Old Catholic and Lutheran Communions, the Church of Scotland and the Free Churches from the United Kingdom.

Tracing the history of the Lambeth Conferences (see EPS No. 25), the Archbishop said that "here in the Church of England and throughout the Anglican Communion we are learning, though still imperfectly, to bring together into a truer and more trustful unity the several strands of our Anglican inheritance ... It is a reconciling task for which, as we believe, Christ has specially equipped us by the experiences of our spiritual and temporal history."

But, Dr. Fisher said, the work of reconciliation cannot be done alone. "A spirit which was hardly visible in 1867 (when the first Lambeth Conference was held) is now visibly at work and bearing fruit everywhere in Christendom ... The spirit of reconciliation in Christ is the spirit of the ecumenical movement ... The whole Catholic Church knows that Christ is calling it to the joys and hazards of a reconciliation and reunion still beyond our reach but no longer beyond our confident endeavour."

This year's conference, the archbishop said, "will give some attention to those factors, cultural, racial and national, which by their strains and stresses

put peace to flight and turn men to hurt and devour each other; and we shall consider also those varied modern conditions which are threatening the wholesomeness and indeed the stable existence of the family and of the home".

"I hope that all our work in this conference will be dominated by the sense of the mission which Our Lord lays upon His Church to be the instrument of reconciliation," he said. "This distracted world needs, desperately needs, to discover how and at what price friendship, harmony, peace among men can be had. To tell the world the answer and to live the answer among all people is the most urgent service demanded of the Church."

The Anglican bishops will meet in private sessions until the closing service on August 10 in Westminster Abbey.

E.P.S., Geneva

Swedish Break Predicted If Women Are Ordained

(Sigtuna) - If women are accepted for ordination in the Church of Sweden, a "confessional front" opposing the move will probably be set up within the national Lutheran Church, according to a report in "Church News", issued in Sigtuna by the Northern Ecumenical Council.

The Rev. Gunnar Rosendal, a "high church" vicar at Osby and leader of the movement, says that bishops who agree to ordain women will lose the confidence of many groups within the church. He says it "must be expected that a confessional front will be established in the church with members who are bound to refuse collaboration with bishops, clergymen, deacons and laymen who accept women pastors".

Recognising that the move will cause a break in the Swedish Church, Mr. Rosendal says it will be "a sound break because it will be an expression of the inner rupture and the schism resulting from the ordination of women pastors".

The Church Convocation is scheduled to take action on the question of women in the ministry at its meeting in the autumn.

E.P.S., Geneva

Danish Bishops Support Ordass

(Copenhagen) - Bishops of the Church of Denmark have backed a statement made by Bishop Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard supporting deposed Hungarian Bishop Lajos Ordass (see EPS No. 26).

Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard, preaching on July 6 in the cathedral of Copenhagen at the installation of Bishop K.C. Holm as new head of the diocese of Fyn, said that "Bishop Ordass, our brother in Christ, has refused to budge an inch from what to him is truth and right. He stands alone. But he is not alone because fraternal hands will rise in the world and help to transform sorrow and wrath into intercession and help."

Following the service attended by all the Danish bishops, they expressed "full agreement" with the bishop's statement.

Bishop Ordass was forced to retire as head of the Southern Diocese of the Hungarian Lutheran Church on June 24.

E.P.S., Geneva

Greek Orthodox in USA Report Progress

(Salt Lake City, Utah) - "All departments and phases of Greek Orthodox life in America show progress," Archbishop Michael of New York, head of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, reported at the church's fourteenth biennal congress this month in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In his annual report, Archbishop Michael, who is one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches, reported to the 2,000 clergy and lay delegates that the church's 1958 budget has been increased 20 per cent over last year's; that the Holy Cross Orthodox Theological School in Brookline, Massachusetts, is now granting Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology degrees; a home for orphaned boys will soon be set up by the church; and a home for the aged has been opened at Riverdale, New York, while other homes are planned for Chicago and Pittsburgh.

A message to the congress from the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul noted that there have been discussions about whether or not the Greek language should be emphasised with Greek youth, and said: "Our ancestors devoutly and under the most difficult circumstances preserved our greatest traditions; our Orthodoxy and the sacred language of our Scriptures, which constitute the basis and the foundation of our faith. To perpetuate these traditions successfully the attention of all of us must be turned towards our younger generation with especially kind attention, affection and magnanimity. For this no sacrifice is too great."

Archbishop Michael reported that attempts were being made to further the use of Greek in public schools and colleges.

E.P.S., Geneva

Conference Considers Evangelism in Industry and the City

(Geneva) - Participants from 25 countries spent two weeks in June discussing evangelism and church life in the city and industry, at the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Institute near Geneva, Switzerland.

One of a series of meetings on evangelism problems held this year at the institute, the conference considered four basic questions: the problem of identifying the Church with the world; the relation of pastoral and lay ministries; the relation of the ministry to industry; and necessary changes in congregations in urban and industrial areas.

Father St. J.B. Groser of the Royal Foundation of St. Katharine in London called for a "radical identification" by Christians with the life of groups in society which do not trust the Church.

The Rev. Gordon Crosby, minister of the Church of the Saviour in Washington D.C., told the conference that he believed that there was no real difference between the ministry of a pastor or priest and the ministry of a layman in his secular vocation. The idea, hotly debated by the conference, was discussed by a study group which suggested that there should be specific recognition by the Church of lay ministries which would be parallel to the ordination of pastors or priests.

The structure of the congregation must change, the churchmen were told by Dr. Harald Poelchau, an industrial pastor in Berlin, if it is to be relevant to the industrial worker. Citing the many "communities" of the modern worker - family, trade union, shop floor, sports group and possibly the church - Dr. Poelchau called for a ministry to the groups which naturally occur in industry, without an immediate attempt to relate them to a congregation.

The conference's study was based on speeches by Dr. Robert S. Bilheimer, director of the WCC's Division of Studies, Mr. Klaus von Bismarck, industrial secretary of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia (Germany), the Rev. Paul Abrecht of the WCC's Department on Church and Society, and Mr. Griffiths Malaba, headmaster of the Secondary School of Tegwani Training Institute in Southern Rhodesia.

E.P.S., Geneva

1,000 Youth Taking Part in 1958 Work Camps

(Geneva) - A thousand youth from around the world are taking part in 40 ecumenical work camps in 25 countries this summer, doing everything from building huts for youth activities of the Chinese YMCA in Singapore to digging pipelines in Greece. The camps are sponsored by the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches.

On June 27 the summer's first European work camp got under way in Lövånger, Sweden, with campers restoring an abandoned "church-town" for use as an ecumenical centre for retreats, youth camps and conferences. Around the church in the village of Lövånger, as in many towns in northern Sweden, there are about 200 small wooden huts which in former days were used by the parishioners when they came from long distances to spend the weekends near their church. Today, when most of the people have cars, the huts are unused and in need of repair. The 25 campers are doing carpentry, painting, landscaping and roofing.

Other projects this year include the first ecumenical work camp in Madagascar, at Vakin' Ankaratra, where during August campers will help build a country school described as "indispensable to the work of the local parish". Campers in Jordan will help build a Moravian Mission leper colony in Ramallah; in a South London industrial mission they will work on a parish hall and club house; in an industrial section of Porto, Portugal, they will remodel a church and provide facilities for a primary day school; build a chapel for a united Protestant programme in the village of Los Indios, Puerto Rico; finish constructing a youth centre in Morija, Basutoland; build a playground in Hong Kong. Six camps are scheduled in the United States.

Other projects are scheduled for Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, Korea, Belgian Congo and the Union of South Africa.

One camp was held this spring in the Philippines, where 23 campers from the United States, Japan, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines helped clear the site for a new transmitter for DYSR, radio station of the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches. Other projects included building a road connecting the transmitter buildings to the sea, roofing one of the buildings and hauling several hundred cubic feet of sand for the main building of the station.

E.P.S., Geneva

Netherlands Reformed Church Extends Mission Work

(Driebergen) - The General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church has decided to extend its missionary work in Africa, mainly in predominantly Moslem areas.

The decision, made at the synod's annual summer conference, held in Driebergen, is described as an innovation for the Dutch churches because until now Dutch mission work has been largely restricted to areas politically linked with the Netherlands.

The synod had before it a statement from the Dutch Ecumenical Council on relations between Dutch churches. The memorandum warns against "false ecumenicity" and an unwillingness to face basic questions. Christians in the Netherlands, the document said, should not be content as long as the "Gereformeerde" churches, which do not cooperate in the Dutch Ecumenical Council, do not take part in ecumenical discussions.

Churches were advised to make "very wise" use of the new ruling admitting women as elders and deacons (see EPS No. 26); to be cautious when difficulties arose and not to make the situation difficult for the new elders or deacons when they began their work. E.P.S., Geneva

Reformed Churches in Netherlands Favour Ecumenical Contacts

Only 29 out of 350 of the "Gereformeerde" churches in the Netherlands, a group that has not officially taken part in the ecumenical movement, disapprove of ecumenicity, according to a recent survey by an association to promote understanding between Reformed churches in the Netherlands.

Letters went to all the 800 Christian Reformed churches (Gereformeerde Kerken) in the country, asking about their contacts with one another and ways in which they cooperate in evangelism and mission. Of the 350 replies, only 29 churches said they disapproved of the ecumenical movement.

Several Dutch church newspapers have commented that evidently most of the Gereformeerde churches are not as strongly opposed to ecumenical ideas as has been supposed. E.P.S., Geneva

Fifteen Years Without a Pastor

(Platicovo) - After fifteen years a Reformed pastor has conducted a service for the thirty-member congregation at Platicovo, Yugoslavia. Couples who had not been married in church and children who had not been baptised were present for the service.

Reports from the minority church in Yugoslavia describe the difficulty of giving spiritual care to all congregations and say that hundreds of Reformed Christians have had no pastor of their own for years. Instead, many of them attend services of other confessions. In Sremska Mitrovica, Reformed church members are the guests of the Adventists each Sunday. In other places services are read on Sundays but no formal services are held because a suitable room is not available. The problem was solved in the village of Srbobran recently when the Serbian Orthodox congregation lent their parish room to the Reformed members. A new congregation at Osijek has a new church building, paid for from the sale of handwork of the church women. E.P.S., Geneva

Yugoslav Church Asks for Contacts Abroad

(Feketitsch) - The Synodal Council of the Reformed Church in Yugoslavia has asked the State Department for Religious Affairs to allow Yugoslav students to go abroad to study and to admit pastors from other countries to work in the church in Yugoslavia.

In a second request, the council asked the state to consider the possibility of holding diaspora services in private houses, to release financially poor congregations from making back payments of social insurance and to reduce the normal contributions.

At the same time, the council asked the state department to receive a church delegation to discuss the petition. E.P.S., Geneva

WSCF Plans First Conference in West Africa

(Geneva) - For the first time, the World's Student Christian Federation is setting up a course for student leaders in West Africa, as a result of recommendations made by the All-Africa Conference at Ibadan, Nigeria, last January. Dates for the sessions, to be held at the Presbyterian College at Aburi, near Accra, Ghana, are August 25 to September 4.

To contribute to the life of the Church in West Africa, the conference aims at defining the nature of Christian witness there today; at working in deeper unity with universities, high schools and colleges; and at training student leaders.

E.P.S., Geneva

In Brief

French Pastor Etienne Mathiot, freed last month after serving part of a sentence for aiding an agent of the Algerian rebel National Liberation Front, is now pastor of a Lutheran church near Paris (see EPS Nos. 10, 11 and 24).

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The next Kirchentag in the Netherlands will be held in 1960. A preparatory meeting will be held this autumn to discuss "different aspects of the Christian life in response to God's Word as it relates to our fellow men and women, the world around us, and ourselves".

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His Beatitude Vikentije Prodanovic, 68, Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, died in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, on July 5. He was elected head of the Orthodox communion of Serbia, which has eight million members, in 1950.

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Miss Nina Borelli has been appointed to succeed the Rev. Edward H. Patey as secretary of the Youth Department of the British Council of Churches. Mr. Patey has been named resident Canon of Coventry Cathedral. Miss Borelli, a Methodist, has worked with the YWCA for sixteen years.

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American and European students will discuss "Europe and America, Partners Although Mutual Strangers" from July 12 to 19 at the church conference centre in the castle of Oud-Poelgeest at Oegstgeest, the Netherlands.

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More than 20,000 persons attended a mass meeting in Wuppertal, Germany, last week, marking the 110th anniversary of the YMCA in Western Germany. There are more than 1,100 branches with about 87,000 members. In addition to the mass meeting on July 4, worshippers crowded twenty churches for Sunday services and 1,500 young men attended a conference for YMCA leaders.

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The Swedish Society of Friends (Quakers) has sent a petition to the Swedish government, urging the recognition of civilian "service for peace" as an alternative to military service.

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Women theologians are now eligible for ordination in the Evangelical Church of the Palatinate (Germany), though a woman pastor must resign if she marries. The regional churches of Lübeck and Anhalt have also decided to admit women to the ministry, the first time that the ordination of women has been sanctioned by church law in the German regional churches.

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A delegation from the Old Catholic Church of Yugoslavia will visit Poland during 1959, the first visit from Yugoslav religious community leaders since the end of the war. Plans were discussed during a recent two-week visit to Yugoslavia by Bishop Julian Pekala of the Old Catholic Church in Poland.

Dr. Howard E. Short, professor at the College of the Bible in Lexington, Kentucky, is the new editor of "The Christian Evangelist", weekly magazine of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ). He succeeds Dr. Lin D. Cartwright.

* *

Over 90 per cent of Australians say they are Christians, according to a survey by Sydney University. Of these, 41.9 said they were Anglicans, 24.3 per cent Roman Catholics, 12 per cent Methodists, 10.7 per cent Presbyterians, 1.5 per cent Baptists, 1.5 per cent Lutherans. Congregationalists, Salvationists and other religious groups make up another 6 per cent.

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"United Presbyterian Women" has been formed with the merger of the women's groups of the Presbyterian Church in the USA and the United Presbyterian Church of North America. The two churches merged last month (see EPS No. 22). The 5,000 delegates unanimously adopted a "Charter for Christian Action" which included a point urging the United States to "move as rapidly as possible" to stop nuclear weapons testing and stockpiling, and calling on the federal government "to emphasise the controlled development of nuclear energy for peaceful and constructive purposes".

E.P.S., Geneva

Document

Message of a Christian Peace Conference Called Under the Auspices of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Czechoslovakia in June

Jesus Christ deprived death of its power and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Therefore all who wish to obey His commandment of love and truly belong to Him are called to serve with all their strength in order that all men, believers and unbelievers, may have life.

This ancient mission of God's people stands all the more urgently before us when we reflect on the terrible possibilities of destruction - yes, the very annihilation of the entire human race - which have been opened up by nuclear weapons, by the entire technique of modern war. In this situation we must clearly see that war means death, while peace means life. To toy with the idea of atomic war and to prepare for it, therefore, is rebellion against God and a crime against the life of mankind for which Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead.

Through Him the world is reconciled with God. Therefore we strive for the reconciliation of the nations with each other and towards a beginning in this direction on our own part, the Christians of all nations.

Jesus Christ loved us and freed us from all fear. Let us therefore guard against fear which in itself gives rise to greater danger of war.

We are able to become brothers for the sake of Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, help people and nations to rid themselves of mistrust, to have respect and understanding for one another and genuinely to behave in a brotherly way to one another.

In His name we may call in peace on the Lord our God. Let us therefore pray again and again for world peace. But let us never forget that we ourselves are put under obligation by this prayer not to pray for what we deny by our deeds.

Jesus Christ has called us to be sober in judgment. Therefore let us not allow ourselves to be misled and deceived by underestimation and belittling of the atomic danger. Let us warn each other not to be guilty of indifference or even of furthering crime through our lack of vigilance. Let us not be misled by the false belief that it would be possible to solve the great problems of the world by force or oppression, or through the cold war.

In view of the mortal danger threatening mankind today, let us stand out and ask our governments for the establishment of an atom-free zone in order to relax today's tension, for a ban on tests of atomic weapons, for the outlawing and destruction of atomic weapons, and for early meetings of statesmen at the highest level to solve world problems.

All the peoples long for peace.

Glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good. (Romans 2: 10).

Further messages were addressed to the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom and to the Russian government. Both ask for the abolition of nuclear armament. In the letter to the USSR gratitude is expressed for its decision to stop nuclear tests. In the letter to the USA and the UK the hope is voiced that the governments will stop the tests.

(See also EPS No. 23.)